

An Open Communiqué to the IUAES Commission Heads and Global Anthropology Fraternity

By: *Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Anthropology Departments of University of Delhi, University of Utkal and University of Sambalpur and United Indian Anthropology Forum (UIAF)*

Subject: Objections to unilateral, unethical and unfair decisions of IUAES Executive, in contravention to the mandate of IUAES General Assembly, Brazil, 2018; IUAES deviating from **all** the original decisions, including **Venue (KISS)**, Collaborators, Theme, and even the Dates for the 2023 Congress; Need to respond with an objective appraisal of facts regarding the event.

2018: IUAES General Assembly, Brazil, 2018, approved the proposal of Dr AchuthaSamanta (Founder, KISS), Prof. Deepak Kumar Behera (then VC, Sambalpur University) and Prof Soumendra Patnaik (then VC, Utkal University and President of Indian Anthropology Association (IAA)), for **hosting the World Anthropology Congress, 2023, in KISS, India.**

August 2020: The IUAES Executive withdrew the collaboration with KISS, based on unfounded and hearsay-based allegations, i.e. cultural genocide, de-tribalization, Hinduaization of tribes, factory school.

However, the first-hand experience of some of the very functionaries of the IUAES Executive (including Prof. Junji) was very overwhelming and admired the initiatives of KISS' and expressed their great satisfaction, as evident from their discourses and deliberations in 2012 during their visit to KISS for IUAES inter-congress (on "*Children, Youth and Childhood*", organized by Prof. Behera).

In October 2019, KISS, on request from IUAES, made a presentation on the progress of the World Congress in the General Assembly of the Poznań {Poland} Inter-Congress. The IUAES Executive expressed their great satisfaction.

IUAES Executive has conveniently ignored the following facts even after repeated communications:

- KISS would not have freely opened its doors at the first instance to the world of Anthropology if it is guilty of any of these allegations.
- Dr Christine Finnan, an American Anthropologist, who was fortunate to spend about six months at KISS as a Fulbright Nehru Research Fellow and brought out an ethnographic account of KISS, based on her personal experience, had dismissed the allegations against KISS, and had published her findings through scholarly articles in reputed journals
- A letter by the Secretary of the **ALL Odisha Adivasi Forum** with nearly 4500 signatures, strongly refuting the allegations, had also been submitted to the President, IUAES, in August 2020.
- The IUAES took no cognizance of the requests of Prof. Behera for the virtual dialogue with senior Indian anthropologists on the issue; to send a delegation to KISS for empirical verification of the reality, to listen to the voice of the Indian Anthropologists; and to wait at least for a month before making any announcement in haste without verifying the ground realities.

IUAES is putting its entire weight on Prof. Patnaik, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi. It is the largest department of anthropology in India and said to be the official HQ of the Indian Anthropology Association (IAA).

- **The Staff Council has unanimously** (barring Prof. Patnaik) **rejected the proposal of Prof. Patnaik and extended full support to Dr Achyuta Samanta and KISS for the organization of the World Congress. Moreover, the Council has also resolved to dissociate from** Indian Anthropological Association after **raising serious objections to its functioning** (staff council dated 8th April 2021).
- Two of the original architects (Dr Samanta and Prof. Behera) are on the side of KISS and only Prof. Patnaik is on the other side, who himself was the nominee of Prof Samanta and Prof Behera to represent the organizers in the IUAES Executive, and on whom IUAES has put its weight..
- Moreover, the original collaborators like Utkal University and Sambalpur University, as well as, the new collaborator, the premier institution i.e. the University of Delhi, are also standing firm with KISS.
- The sweeping mandate of the Indian anthropological fraternity is in favour of KISS.
- Voices of seasoned anthropologists holding/having held high levels positions like Prof. P.C. Joshi, Prof. Sabita Acharya, and Prof. K.K. Basa, Prof. P.K. Mishra and Prof. R.K. Mutatkar and many others current/former Heads, senior Professors of the Anthropology departments in India, all insisting on IUAES Executive not to deviate from the mandate of the IUAES General Assembly in 2018, have been totally ignored by the Executive.
- The First Joint statement was sent by Prof Behera, with endorsement by a large number of senior Anthropology professionals, and Indian Anthropological organisations, in mid-August 2020, expressing disappointment over the uncertainty created in the organization of World Congress 2023.
- A similar Joint Statement was sent by the Member Secretary of the *United Indian Anthropology Forum*, representing more than 2000 Anthropologists, on 27 August 2020, with no response at all from the Executive.

This Communiqué is intended to have your informed support and for dissemination among your colleagues and researchers to encourage their participation, for making the Congress a grand success, even while you persuade the IUAES Executive in tandem to correct its historic blunder, by coming to terms with the reality, for the sake of the subject, and of its stakeholders in the present and of the future.

We expect a positive response from you at the earliest, upholding the glorious tradition of Anthropology,

1. Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS)
2. Department of Anthropology, Utkal University
3. Department of Anthropology, Sambalpur University
4. Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi
5. United Indian Anthropology Forum (UIAF)